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834 not be good. This extremely unpleasant prescription, in conjunction with the expensive medicine, stands in the way of a greater distribution of smelting enterprises. Even in places where a hut for iron smelting is already in existence, people prefer to buy iron from others if their own has been a failure several times, for this misfortune is attributed to the failure of the fire as a result of the sexual /226/ impurity of one or a number of the participants. The [439] importation of European iron in recent years is dealing a death blow to the native industry. The fear of bringing anything impure (and all sexual matters are pre-eminently regarded as such) into contact with pure fire goes so far that a medicine is made by those participants whose wives menstruate during the smelting. This consists of a diamond-shape piece cut out of the bark on the supporting beam of the smelting hut on the side facing the furnace, and it is supposed to represent the female sex organ. The symbol is rubbed with redwood which has been pulverized by the woman concerned and represents her blood flow; it is covered with a leaf of the [184] *Myrianthus arboreus* P. B. (mangäme III Fang) to indicate that one wants everything impure to be hidden and therefore harmless. At the same time the plant is supposed to cause the iron to coalesce to the same degree as the individual fruits are united in a syncarp. In Plate 17 one can see a piece of the leaf on the supporting post (top left), as well as (somewhat lower down) a bark container which holds fragments of ancestors' skulls, a number of antelopes' horns, and a great variety of other medicines that are used later. That the 325 people concerned with the ancestor cult are regarded as particularly 769 suited to bring the work to a successful conclusion is apparent from the fact that they alone may tend the fire (see Fig. 183).

The smelting of iron is thus above all under the aegis of the fire cult, but it is also closely linked with the worship of the ancestors who contribute to the success of the enterprise insofar as it lies in their power to do so.

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325 Iron crops out in the form of brown iron ore (ṣṣṣ IV) (1) and is

1. The analysis carried out by Mr. Du Bois at the suggestion of Professor Pufahl (Königliche Bergakademie in Berlin)

832 fumigated (Fig. 58), while the skulls with cold severity surveyed the situation, until they themselves had justice done to them, for they were carried in a dance around the love tree. Meanwhile, a number of the participants took red dye and with it drew a line on the bark of the love tree, observing that they themselves would like to look like this in the eyes of their beloved. Another one took black dye in addition to the red and first made a red line, saying, "In the eyes of the girl to which I shall go (he probably was not allowed to pronounce her name) I want to appear like this (red)"; then he drew a black line and added, "On the other hand, the girl shall see all others like this (black line)." We already know that red is the color of life, [822] of joy, and of light. Black here signifies its opposite, the unpleasant and ugly.

832 Finally, a small punishment was meted out to the ancestral
769 skulls by sticking them in the above-mentioned draw traps set up around the tree and leaving them there until the next day. Such a punishment of the ancestors is very rare, and it is significant that it does not occur at the Malan but in connection with the love medicine, which is to be regarded as a degenerate form of the Malan. Then around the tree a great variety of other medicines were distributed, such as red dye and a piece from the loincloth of a mother-in-law. Among the Fang the genitals [826] themselves are supposed to be taken, these having been cut from the deceased mother-in-law. /162/ /Fig. 58 appears here in the original text/

832 On the forenoon of the second day of the festival about 25
783 banana leaf vessels were set up in a row in the festive area and
[415] filled with freshly fetched water. Into the first vessel the medicine man put a whole pile of bark pieces and leaves, all of them love medicines. The other vessels were treated in a more perfunctory fashion: only a few pieces of bark were placed in the second vessel, and in each of the following, only one; the last vessels did not get anything. The medicine man then sat down at the first vessel, blew into it with a pipe, whereupon a thick, [388] soap-like foam arose, which supposedly comes from the bark of [924] the Cylicodiscus gabunensis (Taub) Harms (edum), and then washed his face, first in this vessel and then in all the following

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[417]



Fig. 58. Love Medicine Feast, engongeschok.
A number of young men have themselves fumigated
over a fire in which love medicines are burned.
Ancestral skulls are in the background. Ebāngon
(Esseng family).

ones as rapidly as possible. The aim is to purify oneself and through the external purification to bring about an inner one so that the beloved girl will see her suitor pure, white as the leaves of Abutilon, and then love him. Whether the desired effect is achieved, I must confess I do not know; externally, at any rate, the favorable effect of the water cannot be denied. The foam is intended to cause the girl's heart to "open up" in the same way. This ablution may also be undertaken at times other than at the love festival, for instance, when a person has his eye on a certain girl, but in that case, the nails, head hair, pubic hair, and underarm hair of this girl must also be put in the vessel. /163/

832 While the ablution was still going on, two people ran down
526 the village square and threw the civet skin back and forth to
each other, crossing each other's paths as they ran. People
amused themselves with a similar ball game, whose significance
I was unable to discover during the subsequent dance.

777 a monkey's tail. The hunter thus becomes similar to the animal,
 824 as it were, and the animal loses its shyness of him. In still other
 224 cases, the game is to be made "weak" while the hunter and his
 hunting dog are to be made "strong," and for this purpose parts
 are taken from corresponding plants, or they are taken from trees
 that bear much fruit in order to have similarly rich results. Finally,
 plants are chosen which are intended to remove the noxious im-
 purity of the body. /Fig. 62. Medicines of the Fang. (a) medi-
 789 cine for wealth, the root of a tree (Homalium africanum) deco-
 rated with brass wire and a brass ring; (b)-(d) medicine against
 enemy weapons; (e) medicine against enemy surprise attacks,
 fruit of the Tiliacea Duboscia macrocarpa (akak), to make
 enemies calm, peaceful (Duboscia and Leptonychia = peace linden);
 (f) medicine for successful travels; (g) medicine for speaking and
 singing well, contains the tooth of a tree cony (which is continually
 "singing"); (h) medicine for the Dschama dance; (i) medicine
 against palpitations and nervousness, the heart-shaped fruit of the
Ertela scandens, worn around the neck (makes the heart strong),
 about 1/4 actual size; (k) war medicine, leopard claw, 1/2
 actual size. / /166/ The manner of use varies: sometimes it is
 777 internal, the leaves being cut up into small pieces and eaten with
 224 the meat of the animal one has most recently sometimes killed;
 783 it is external, in the form of injections of a bark infusion, which
 have the double effect of removing the impurity from the body and
 imparting to it the essence of the plant; or a piece of wood is
 charred and then used to draw a line across the forehead, so that
 one "looks" just like the plant concerned. Most frequently, the
 impurity is removed by ablutions: either individual parts, face,
 hands, and frequently also elbows and the knee, as well as the
 rifle, are washed in medicine water; or the entire body is washed
 in a stream, on which occasion a little dam blocks off the water
 which, after the completion of the ablution, is again allowed to
 run its course so that it will carry the dirt far away downstream
 (oñe nkiai). In order to guarantee the lasting efficiency of the
 777 medicines, people generally wear pieces of wood and bark as
 224 pendants on neck chains, hunting pouches, satchels, belts, and so
 forth.

344/687 circumcision was public, and the woman to whom it was done under-
went the gibes and insults of all the inhabitants.

883 The life of the young people is the same as that of the adults. The
virginity of a woman is considered unimportant and the Fan have
936 sexual relations from the time they are capable of cohabitation. When
818 a young girl has a child, it belongs to her parents, from whom the
child acquires wealth; there is no search for the father and the young
girl keeps all the respect which she enjoyed. Young girls are free to
give themselves to whomever they please. This very broad morality,
[582] however, has one important qualification in that there are, so to speak,
no young girls, the little girls having been married off by their parents
very early, sometimes even before their birth.

582 Marriage (alug). Men rarely marry before the age of twenty years,
and usually later, because they do not have the means to pay the dowry
for taking a wife.

582 Exogamy is always practiced because marriage between people of
835 the same tribe is sterile. Marriage between cousins is forbidden up to
the third generation and in general, marriage is forbidden between
persons linked by any kind of kinship; in this case there is also pro-
hibition of sexual relations. No penalty is prescribed for infraction,
[684] but the guilty ones will fall ill and their children, if they have any,
will not live.

582 Occasionally there are instances when marriage between relatives
783 is authorized, but only after the practitioner has removed the pro-
835 hibition by the process [88] called abvule minsem. The practitioner
goes to find some termite earth (ngurege), a plant (mekaga), and a
vine (nyola dzik); the plant and vine are folded and placed in an etok
[685] (a container of banana leaves) full of water. The termite earth is
placed on a nzum (see the description in the section on conception) and
the etok is placed underneath. The two kinsmen who want to marry
also stand underneath it, while the practitioner climbs onto the nzum,
dips the leaves in the etok, and says, "nseme ose mi waga bo e wo ma
va yui" (I remove every prohibition that you have made). He hits the
termite earth with the leaves and then takes the etok and pours the
contents onto the heads of the two people from whom he is removing
the prohibition. With the remainder, the man and woman each takes
a washing.

583 A man who has not enough dowry but who finds a young girl eager
to marry him may take her away in the night; when the parents come

582 related by marriage: between a man and "any woman, even
835 divorced, of his kinship by marriage," between "members of the son-in-law's family" and any woman divorced from the kinship by marriage. (1) There are also prohibitions relating to the

1. Cf. L. Mba, op. cit., p. 17.

"adopted" (ntobô). It seems important to us to state that these various interdicts exclude from marriage persons between whom there are already very definite relations, those due to effective kinship (including "cousins" to the level where the nd'è bôl is most often split into separate elements), those that exist between groupings already related by marriage, and those which arise from the state known as "adoption." Everything takes place as [60] if the aim sought by means of marriage was to impose an alliance on the most foreign elements — foreign and hostile being considered as synonymous during the period of conquest. (2) The

2: Cf. E. Trezenem, op. cit., pp. 91-92: "Relations with foreign tribes are rare... the foreigner is accepted with reserve and only when he shows merchandise proving that his visit has no other purpose than to fetch a woman whom he can marry. The tribes are very frequently hostile to one another..."

obligation to respect both double exogamy and the above-mentioned interdicts contributes essentially to broadening among the groupings the field of relations based on co-operation. Incest, 835 an infraction of these principles, enters into the category of the 713 nsem defined by Martrou as "ritual impurity, moral defilement." It brings about sterility or illness and arouses in traditional society a collective reaction. V. Largeau in his work mentions the process of expiation (3) in use at that time with the intervention of the

3. Op. cit., article: Inceste [Incest].

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"men's society" and the rite allied to the makuma dance characteristic of this society.

Marriage creates the so-called "restricted" or "individual" family. This has no special name and represents the smallest grouping in which communal life takes place. The husband and wife are nomō and nga to each other — these two terms stressing the biological character of the union since they also signify male and female. His parents-in-law are minki [128] or nkia, "he who has received the bride price," a word recalling the seal that has validated the union. In the same way the term mbōm, meaning "newly married woman whose bride price has just been paid," is used to designate the daughter-in-law, and has the same context. The principle already mentioned of the pre-eminence attached to seniority subsists in the relations with the abē. For the husband the wife's eldest sister is mīnki (mother-in-law) while the younger sister is ngōm zam (my daughter). On a similar pre-eminence is based the authority of the first wife over the other wives; while the former is nanō (mother) the others are mbōm (daughter-in-law) — which explains her role of directing the various jobs and moral responsibilities entrusted to her. Finally, the personal element at the level of these relations is perfectly symbolized by the position accorded to the preferred wife (nluga or ntōmba). This astonished one of the first administrators of the Fang country, who wrote: "While they usually profess great indifference toward their wives and have no scruples over renting or lending them out, they have a rather keen affection for the companion whom they choose as 'favorite.'" (1) This is the least socialized part and manifests re-

1. Archives for the Year 1905,
Libreville.

lations that have a certain spontaneity between the two elements associated by marriage.

Residential Units

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The colonial government has acknowledged only a "collection" of villages in the Fang country, giving this name to the

586 made, but this practice is only very rarely followed in cases of free
851 union, ébon, even when that is followed by a regular marriage of the
848 natural parents. Illegitimate children, fruits of an ébon, bobengon,
are kept in their mother's clan, where, moreover, they rank socially
only after legitimate children.

577 There used to exist a kind of adoption, rare today, of a political
614 rather than family nature, which could almost be defined as naturali-
640 zation. It could only be carried out by the head of an extended family
on behalf of an orphan, mone nyui, of another clan (orphans within
/56/ the clan being, of course, already considered children of the
head of the family). The adopted child, abiaé môsô (i.e., "conceived
[833] in the daytime," sexual relations being lawful only between sundown
and sunrise), came into the clan with a status analogous to that of
the monengon. He remained subject to the marriage prohibitions of
his clan of origin.

609 A non-Pahouin outsider permanently residing in a village, a nabe,
614 may benefit through marriage by alliance, élat, which does not there-
by make him a member of the clan. He becomes a monekal (sister's
son, uterine relative) and his children, though legitimate, belong to
their mother's clan.

593 The descent relationship may be broken by paternal or maternal
578 curse, meyo'é: the parent uttering the curse shows the child his
sexual organs, "the place whence he came," while pronouncing a
formula oath. The curse is supposed to bring misfortune and death
to the offspring accursed, whom everyone avoids. It can only be
[783] lifted by a collective purificatory rite (étye, tyô) in which the whole
nda bôt participates.

3. Age Grades

561 The individual's life cycle is marked by a certain number of
transitions, which are accompanied, or were usually accompanied, by
rites that will be discussed further on (p. 115). These crises are birth,
weaning, puberty, attaining majority, marriage, death. Age
grades correspond to the intermediate stages; they are less strictly
defined today than formerly.

561 I do not know the exact word for fetus: people say abum, belly.
443 There must be a more precise term, but I think there is a prohibiton
connected with it, certainly as regards men, although it may now be

631 Given Pahouin interest in a political system based on election, which
636 pretty well corresponds both with their individualism and with their
181 mistrust of individuals, it may be that such a system has some chance
of success if it is allowed to become Pahounized.

5. Associations

575 Traditional associations were undoubtedly less developed among the Pahouin than among other African societies with more closely knit or more stable hierarchical structures. The social groups at the core of clans or villages arose and decayed in accordance with migrations and "swarmings-off." They showed a kinship rather than an associational character.

Nevertheless, there existed within kinship as well as outside it associations not based on descent, voluntary and not de facto /discretionary?/. These were often characterized by initiations and had a magical or religious basis, with varying purposes.

The minsamba, "societies," were temporary, organized for a military operation (oban, mvéle) or for a trade journey to the coast or to the "trading-posts" of the Ogooué. The men who took part often came from different villages or even from different clans bound by an alliance (élat). They swore an oath of loyalty and mutual assistance, involving a ritual sacrifice followed by a communion
782 meal; for a war enterprise, there might be a human victim, especially if it were a matter of avenging the death, kum mbim, of a monyaïf (brother) and if there were a prisoner of war available to sacrifice. The association was dissolved once its end had been accomplished, but a bond persisted between its members.

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141 Similar temporary associations could be formed for large elephant hunts; they were moreover often confused with the nsamba dulu or nsamba ayak (traveling society, trade society) afterward organized for the sale of the ivory.

575 The most important permanent associations were those among the initiates of different rites. But what was most often involved in these
783 was a kind of relationship by way of a rite, which was not the rite's real purpose, or was so only adventitiously. When, for instance, all the inhabitants of a village took part in the ésye purification rite, a strengthening of the fraternal ties among them certainly ensued, but the prime purpose was purification (1). /63/

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1. Among the Beti (Eton) another rite is to be found that cuts across clan or tribal barriers: "étup is planted" to make peace, to end a family quarrel, to check an epidemic. The old men consult the spider oracle, /63/ then call the men together. The assembly is in charge of the mbongengāñ (magic-makers—initiates of higher rank). The members of the two groups start to hurl mutual accusations. Then those who bring bad luck are pointed out, the biwonwolo. A shrub, meyan, is then planted, and a bian /medicament/ is prepared in a pot, over which the audience swear an oath to give up behaving badly to one another. The bian is then inserted into the nostrils of the biwonwolo in order to do away with the bad luck. (J. B.)

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626 Nevertheless, certain rites had along with other aims that of setting up among the initiates an association that would produce a kind of dialectic of energies /sic/ (tyé, kié) between the group and its members. The principal society, which probably had a national character that cut across clan lines, was the ngil (1), about which unfortunate-

1. The origin of this word is uncertain. It has been referred to ngil (njil) meaning gorilla; old administrative reports speak of "gorilla-men." There has also been suggested, less convincingly, a connection with ngul, meaning capacity, potency.

ly very little is known nowadays. The ngil seems to have been the main, if not the only, element of tribal cohesion on a political level. Its function was social control and defense, especially to preserve the society as a whole from the activity of sorcerers. By uniting initiates from all clans, it could settle interclan disputes by avoiding recourse to war or feud. It served to some extent as a police force and judicial system, with the initiates of lower rank carrying out the

575 as strong interclan ties as does ngil; however, the initiation leader may belong to a different clan from the initiates.

[783] Esey (étye or tyo?) is a purification and reconciliation rite, described by Father Guillemin for the Beti; it does not extend outside the ranks of an ayôm (segment).

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825 Among the Boulou of Sangmélina, the Ntoumou of Ambam, and the Fang of Djoum, I found some medical society initiates who call themselves "snakes," using the proper word, benyo (sing. nyo), not the euphemism minkol afan (lit., bush lianas). Their specialty is treating bites and capturing and taming snakes. Initiates are known within the society under the name of one or another variety of snake, conferred at initiation. There are several degrees of initiation (three?): first-degree initiates /65/ are called bo' b'ayañ, children of the Dendraspis; advanced initiates are bo' be mvôm, children of the python. Their medical knowledge seems quite extensive; they claim, in particular, to be immune to /snake/ bites, thanks to the application of a special bian (medicament) through incisions at the time of initiation. The main center of this association would appear to be among the Mekae of Messamena, and it is therefore not properly Pahouin.

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754 All these ritual associations contributed to social order mainly through defense against malevolent sorcerers. The sorcerers, for their part, are often organized in secret societies in order to join forces against the organs of control and repression. Inevitably, therefore, these societies are ill understood. Nearly all of them must have included beyem (sing. nmem), that is, bearers of évu. In fact, if one may be subject to possession involuntarily and even unknown to oneself, one may also nyoñ évu, receive évu, always in the sense of a burden. A person entering a beyem association has to pay for his entrance by the sacrifice of a near relative and also accept the imposition of a special prohibition, the breaking of which (nsem) brings instant death.

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754 The ze mimfaka (lit., road panthers), notorious under the name of leopard-men, were an association of man-eating sorcerers, a kind of counter-ngil (1). Nowadays what is involved may well be a

1. There are also independent ze mimfaka.

pathologically degenerate form of the ngil itself. In the course of a

c. Punishments

681 The scale of punishments included death, the paternal curse, putting in chains (mbok), fine, and bastinado. To these were added for women removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, injection of pimento into the vagina and public exposure, naked, with legs held apart by the mimbok /pl. / (esamele minga).

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782 The death sentence was carried out so as not to shed blood—which would have made purification necessary—by drowning, strangling, burial alive (the last particularly in certain cases of nsem, like incest), or by burning. If the execution had to be bloody, it was carried out by a captive—a foreigner to the clan—but, in theory, the shedding of blood always had a sacrificial character and was to be avoided on all other occasions.

The death sentence was applied for sorcery and serious minsem (breakings of taboo) such as incest or the killing of a monyañ. For other infractions, compensation was the general rule, either by retaliation or by indemnity, the latter usually being the preferred method. For instance, for a homicide /meurtre/ committed outside the clan, the mintol arbitrators tried to make the killer's family pay blood money, either in goods or by giving a woman in compensation. To this there might have been added some sort of disciplinary corporal punishment within the killer's clan or family. If compensation was not paid, the victim's clan had recourse to retaliation upon any member of the clan or family of the guilty man: responsibility was individual within the family, collective within the clan and tribe.

A fine must be distinguished from the compensation accorded to the victim: it went, in fact, to the ntyi'i mejô, perhaps to pay for his intervention. It survives today, though illegal, to the benefit of official and semi-official assessors: it is freely called toya, from Coast English tax, to distinguish it from compensation, ngôto = ransom, redemption.

695 Placing in chains applied especially to persons considered socially dangerous (it is nowadays used in remote villages for some insane), bastinado to minor crimes committed within the clan. Clitoridectomy was the punishment for adultery and minor incest. The injection of pimento was rather a nkai, test or ordeal, than a punishment; it was applied especially to widows after the husband's death to discover whether or not they had been responsible. The use of ordeals, minkai,

813 As soon as pregnancy is recognized, the parents have to observe all sorts of bityi, prohibitions, the first of these being to stop having sexual intercourse, which would bring on a miscarriage or produce a monster. They must not go near a corpse nor attend funerals. The woman must abstain from certain foods /91/, the eating of which would harm the child: fish, which would cause skin diseases; bat and duck, which would mean webbed fingers and toes; snake, which would mean a child born without limbs or with atrophied limbs, etc. The woman must avoid taking long strides and stepping over holes or ditches and must stop wearing drawers if she has done so before. The husband must not nail or tie anything, which would make for a difficult delivery; he must also abstain from certain foods. During pregnancy the woman anoints the belly and breasts with palm oil mixed with baa, wears a special belt of ôkumu liana (a kind of solanaceous plant), and avoids leaving the house barefooted.

"Accidental" miscarriages are generally attributed to the breaking of a taboo (nsem) and entail ritual purification; so long as these have not been carried out, the woman is not allowed to speak to any man except her husband, at least directly, nor to look a man in the face.

783 "Criminal" miscarriages are attributed to sorcery or, more precisely, to an évu, which may belong to the woman herself; they entail more rigorous purification; the lochia are submitted to a kind of magical "disinfecting" before being buried secretly beneath a road so that

847 passers-by will walk over them without knowing. Voluntary abortion, very rare in former times, is becoming fairly common, particularly among unmarried mothers in Christian families; it is brought about by vegetable emmenagogues (one is extracted from papaya root) or by introducing into the neck /of the womb/ a roll of twisted bark (I could not find out from what tree). Sometimes women induce abortion in one of their co-wives out of jealousy.

844 The first delivery and often succeeding ones usually take place in the woman's native village (jañ). A husband is not allowed to take wife and child back home until after payment of what is really the final installment of the bride price, particularly a substantial present for the mother-in-law, which is repeated at each birth, whence the proverb, "A mother-in-law's basket is never full." The parturient is delivered in a sitting position, with her mother or ntyi (mother-in-law or co-wife of higher rank) holding her from behind, and assisted by a midwife, mbialé binga, formerly an official in

- 846 river again (until now she has washed in her hut), puts on new clothes presented by her husband, and starts cooking for him again and working in her garden. Special purification has been carried out if the baby has died in the interval. The prohibition against sexual relations lasts as long as the child is at the breast; to break this taboo would make it nyu meyôm, drink sperm, which might lead to its death.

Postpartum care is given by the mbialé binga, then by the woman's mother or aunt or ntyi. This consists of vaginal douches and external and internal napkins of vegetable compresses.

- 853 The baby may be suckled only by its mother or a woman of the mother's blood, a grandmother or maternal aunt. If this is impossible, the baby cannot live (at least in rural districts where concentrated milk is unknown). Traditional pharmacopoeia possesses, however, extraordinary vegetable lactic stimulants, probably without equivalent in the European pharmacopoeia.

b. Childhood

- 553 The old custom was not to name (yôlé) the baby until it was taken out of the house; until then it was usually called by the name of a small animal, like "squirrel" or "palm rat." Nowadays the name is given within a few days of birth, if for no other reason than to comply with citizenship regulations. /93/

- 641 A name, jôé or jui (also meaning nose, order, command, authority) includes the éyôlé, the individual's own name, and the atinan, complementary name chosen from the biyôlé of ancestors according to clan or family traditions, which are on the decline. Formerly, a cognomen was added to these, a mebatan (1) or jôé mebatan (lit.

1. Trilles translates this word as "genealogy": lañ mebatan means both "to recite the genealogy" and "to recite the salutation," simply because this was in fact the formal way of introducing oneself; a newcomer's genealogy determined how his hosts would "greet" him. True genealogy, pedigree, is éndan, related to ndan, tattoo mark, emblem.

salutation name), sometimes conferred at initiation. This mebatan

764 commun/ were buried by their co-wives and the women of their affinal family. Bongô and bikeñele were buried at home with no other ceremonial than the mother's mourning.

763 When signs of sorcery were found on a corpse, the ngengañ or
787 mvimvi'i turned to divination to find the presumed culprit, who was subjected to an ordeal of bitter herbs. As a general thing, wives had
[615] to submit regularly to the pimento or ant ordeals to make them confess not only the part they might have had in the husband's death but also their adulteries. When no one was found responsible for the death of a mie individual (nonsorcerer), it was decided that he had been the victim of a breaking of taboo, nsem, sometimes unwittingly. Whatever the cause of death, sorcery or nsem or repercussion from
• [783] an act of sorcery, purification always occurred, generally by a sacrifice at the end of the mourning period (meyep). /103/

765 The duration of mourning was, and still is, a mbu /six months/, but it is now less rigorous. Formerly the wives of the dead man were secluded, naked, for a month in his hut, the first wife lying on his bed; their heads and all their body hair were shaved, and they were painted white with ash and forbidden to wash or do their hair until the end of mourning. The dead man's brothers and sons shaved their heads and let their beards grow without trimming or combing; their foreheads were painted white and they wore only old clothes. They had to observe a series of prohibitions concerning certain ways of hunting, the eating of certain kinds of game (perhaps the dead man's personal totem?), all journeys, the circumcision of the dead man's sons, the use of a bed, etc. The end of mourning was marked by a sacrifice and often by a melan ceremony in order to enter into communication with the dead man.

The strictest mourning was observed for the death of an esa, a man of the father's age grade, less for a monyañ, and hardly any for a mongô. With regard to women, a man observed solemn mourning only for his mother and first wife, and this meant mourning within the family, while a man's death involved the whole village. However, an epidemic was followed by heavy mourning, and when the one presumed responsible was identified, it was not enough that he pay avutan, compensation, he was burned or drowned (his immediate family was constrained to pay the avutan), and then a general purification was undertaken.

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266 Boulou and Ntounou, who often fought the Fang, do not accuse them of cannibalism, which seems to prove that this /practice/ was restricted to "foreign" wars, to conquests. Intestinal cannibalism was held in horror and practiced only by sorcerers, often called bedi bôt, man-eaters. Di nlem, usually translated as "soul eating," means literally "to eat the thoracic organs" and may be applied to outright material consumption of these internal organs. On the other hand, the anthropophagy or "necropophagy" that might be qualified as homeopathic, which consists of swallowing in a bian (mbian) a tiny amount, often as ash, of an ancestor's or an initiate's body, has nothing criminal about it and apparently used to be part of all important rites. /113/ From this point of view, the communion meal of the body of the sa, if this rite is truly totemic, represented perhaps manducation of the ancestor.

As for gastronomic cannibalism, it is a story for the picture papers. Not only man's flesh but even that of anthropoids, aside from the cases mentioned above, is absolutely taboo /the plural bityi is used here. —Tr./, and accidental consumption or consumption enforced by absolute necessity (for instance, if hunters are marooned by a flood) entails rigorous purification.

c. Elements of Cosmogony

772 Our knowledge of the traditional world view is largely conjectural
823 too, for the reasons already pointed out. We may state with reasonable certainty two fundamental concepts:

Orientation of space and time referred to the apparent movement of the sun; perhaps it would be better to speak of space-time, as the two ideas are closely connected.

The principle described by Stoll as "double symmetry," which could also be called "sexual complementarity" and summed up as the equilibrium in tension of all elements of the universe /création/.

These two concepts are, as things stand, tied together if not inseparable.

Time and space flow from east to west in a declining movement. East is ôku, upstream, high, and male; west, nke, is downstream, low, and female. The earth, si, is surrounded by water, or rather, enclosed by water and darkness, /thus/, ndim = blind; mendim =

784 Some bityi appear to be connected with totemism: these are the bityi mekam, protective prohibitions, forbidding members of certain clans to kill certain animals or to eat certain plants. Others are undoubtedly connected with the social structure, like sex or age-grade prohibitions, the breaking of which strike at the family hierarchy. Others may be described as hygienic prohibitions, like those connected with pregnancy, illness, or convalescence. There are prohibitions connected with magic: personal taboos vis-à-vis some animal seen in a dream after a family initiation, or imposed when joining an association; prohibitions pronounced by a magician, often out of revenge; prohibitions undertaken as vows to obtain a specific result. Among the Beti, Binet has known women to impose on themselves certain food etyi for a year, at the end of which time there is a party where they collect many presents from their relatives and friends. This [43] [177] seems to be an innovation and perhaps represents a deviation from certain Catholic practices.

[614] It seems that in former times, following a war or an alliance, or in connection with an awuso relationship, two clans might undertake to respect one another's clan taboo. Besides, married women, although they did not enter the husband's clan, were supposed to some extent to respect its bityi.

• 783 Minsem can be expiated by redemption, ngoro, according to different rites (etyi, melan among men, évon among women), including public confession and sacrifice (for women, the sacrifice is made by father or husband, the woman undergoing severe corporal punishment). /123/ 784

Some personal bityi can be raised (kui étyi = to emerge from a taboo) by a process similar to that of redemption for a nsem. This is never possible in cases of general sexual, age-grade, or clan prohibitions.

787 784 The first Christian converts must have shown genuine heroism in giving up their bityi, since they had to overcome, not only personal fear, sometimes at the cost of real psycho-physiological crises, but also unanimous public obloquy and often the vengeance of their family, which attributed to their minsem all its misfortunes. One might say that only that first generation of Christians succeeded in abandoning the bityi almost completely. The following generations, in much greater numbers, continued to observe quite a few bityi, certainly all those that did not openly conflict with the practice of the /new/

779 having been offended by some nsem or ritual impurity, by the
782 violation of an éki, etc., whence the necessity of appeasing the
totem. The greater the misfortune, the more serious must have
been the cause or the fault, even though involuntary, and the
more to be expiated by a larger sacrifice. [508]

At the basis of all general rites concerned with the race,
we find sacrifice in one form or another, either bloody "com-
munional," or bloody and not "communal," or not bloody,
or simply as an offering.

In these sacrifices the victim is often the totem itself.
But in that case there will always have been a previous offering
of another victim. That victim may sometimes be the officiant
himself, as in circumcision, when the sacrificer or operator is
but an agent.

II. Lustral Water; médzim akum

779 In almost all totemic sacrifices, lustral water is used. The
782 practitioner boils water in a clay pot, making an infusion with
various plants. The most commonly used are: áva, a sort of
fragrant labiate; asép, a strong-smelling mint; esun (hua
● 783 gabonensis), a tree with a garlicky smell; esép (monodora
[824] myristica), with an equally strong scent; and in addition, the
leaves of elun, ombien, and several others. Nearly always
eleven plants are used, which must have been picked at the
new moon. To these are added a few pieces of meteorite and
the remains of a sacrifice offered to the tribal totem, consisting
of ashes, bone, and a few bits of horn or hoof, also a little dried
blood.

Before beginning, the practitioner or head of the family
dips his hands in the lustral water. With this he sprinkles the
participants, using a dé, (1) a kind of fly swatter usually made

[412]

1. The dé is the insignia of chiefs. In former times, only they were allowed to use an elephant's tail as a fly swatter, when they themselves had killed the animal.

779 from an elephant's tail. He then sprinkles the victim, the
782 ancestral skulls, and finally the totem.

783 Upon returning from battle, warriors wash their weapons
in lustral water so as to ward off the malevolent spirits of the
dead.

Lustral water is also used in sacrifices made in expiation
of violations of éki.

124] Afterwards the water is emptied in a remote spot. The
chief often carries it back to the village and uses it to water the
tree, usually a fig tree, that was planted over the remains of his
umbilical cord. This tree is an emblem of his own life, and the
lustral water is in this case a sort of sacrifice. [509]

III. Fasting; nze akhu

779 All important totemic ceremonies are preceded by fasts.
785 They are very strict, and the least infraction entails grave
penalties.

They always take place in seclusion: those who are fasting
are kept apart in the forest far from the village, shut up in small
huts. During the fast it is strictly forbidden to drink or eat before
sundown and to wash with water, although rubbing one's body
with ashes is allowed. Furthermore, certain meats and fruits
are prohibited, such as boiled food or fruit; fermented drinks,
except on certain sacred days and before initiations, when, on
the contrary, it is obligatory; and drinking from any kind of pot.
If someone takes a drink inadvertently, the pot must be broken
right away; nevertheless this act involves a ritual fault and re-
quires expiation. One is supposed to drink from a brook, using
a leaf rolled into a cone (oké ésağa). Finally, throughout the
fast all intercourse with women is absolutely prohibited (évek).

779 The duration of the fast varies with the ceremony and the
785 initiation. For circumcision, for instance, it lasts usually a
821 lunar month (ngon). Other initiations rarely exceed seven days,
let us say a lunar quarter, alón ngon; the last quarter is usually
chosen (mété méngon). The moon plays an important role in all

372 log from the last town where the caravan rested. This man kept the piece of wood
484 burning by gently swinging it backward and forward, while marching along the path with his load. On one occasion I timed a native, and when we reached the next stopping place, after a three hours' tramp in the rain, the brand was still burning brightly, and it had been frequently passed from one end of the caravan to the other so that all who desired could light their pipes from it.

372 The Fang use fire in the ceremony of *going out of mourning*. I witnessed this
765 ceremony once at Foulabifong. The widows of an old headman had put in the regular time of mourning and were now to be released. There were seven widows in all, three of middle age, and four young girls. A small fire of leaves had been lighted in the centre of the street, and on each side of the fire stood several young men armed with switches. The widows wore a very slender loin cloth. At a given signal the widows rushed toward the fire and bounded through it, the young men switching them as they passed, but the switches were not used severely. Immediately after the switching, each widow seated herself on the ground holding a bunch of burning leaves under her feet, while a young man shaved their heads with a sharp trade knife. On inquiry regarding this ceremony, I obtained the following information: Passing the fire *cleans* them after mourning (evidently considered a means of purification). Switching reminds the widows of their duty to the man who inherits them as his wives. Burning has two meanings: firstly, the pain caused is endured as a last act of mourning for the departed; second, it signifies that henceforth the widows walk a new path (enter upon a new life).

372 Fire has a place in Fang religion or belief. The sun is considered the *tata*
624 (father) of all heat, and the original maker of all fire, whether by friction, matches, powder, or lightning. When a severe thunderstorm is at its height, the natives say of the lightning, "that the sun has hid his face and is shooting fire, because he is angry." The native word for sun is *fo*. Although the palaver house fire is kept burning, still, no special effort is made to keep it alight; should it go out, any person present is at liberty to rekindle it from newly produced fire.

VII.—Customs.

671 The Fang have no system of law, no judge or tribunal for punishment of crime. Theft, murder, offences against the person are all settled according to native custom.

628 Example: A Fang of the Eisis clan steals goods or a woman from a Fang of
691 the Nge clan. The Nge who has been wronged does not go to the offender for settlement, he goes to another near town and shoots the first goat he sees in the street or if very angry, he may shoot a woman. The owner of the goat or woman demands of the Nge his reason for doing so. The Nge replies, "An Eisis" (giving the man's name) "has wronged me; I put the palaver (his offence) on you." The third party then goes to the Eisis and says, "An Nge" (giving the man's name) "has shot my goat (or woman) because you have made trouble with him; he has put your palaver (trouble) on me. You must pay me!" The original offender is